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MEMORANDUM FOR CARNES LORD  
THE WHITE HOUSE

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Subject: Proposed Visit of Chinese Politburo Member Wan Li

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The Chinese have proposed that Wan Li, ranking Politburo member and Chairman of the National People's Congress, make a visit to the United States after concluding an official visit to Canada in May. A leading figure in China's important reform program, Wan Li is close to China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping and is a respected member of China's "old guard." Wan has a long association with the President, and was one of the latter's host officials (and a friendly tennis adversary) during Mr. Bush's 1985 Vice Presidential visit to China.

High-level visits with all the trappings have played an unusually important role in developing US-China relations over the years, and take on added significance in this first year of the Bush Administration, marked also by improving US-Soviet and Sino-Soviet relations. The Chinese have indicated that they expect Wan would be their highest ranking official to visit the US in 1989, and have asked if the Vice President could be the official host. They propose that Wan enter the US on May 21 or 22 for a trip of about seven days to include Baltimore, New York, and Chicago in addition to Washington. Should the Vice President agree to act as host (as former Vice President Bush did for PRC Military Commission Vice Chairman Yang Shangkun in 1987), the actual hosting duties could be limited to a White House meeting and a ceremonial lunch or dinner.

The Department of State believes that a positive response to China on this proposed visit would help sustain the positive tone in our bilateral relations that will result from the President's trip to China in February. We recommend favorable consideration be given by the Vice President to his hosting this visit by Wan Li. This would be appropriate given Wan's high rank as a Politburo member, his position as Chairman of the National People's Congress, and his personal friendship with President Bush.

Drafted:  
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